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HANATOYUME COMICS
別冊花とゆめ
パレス・メイヂ
1
久世番子

HANATOYUME COMICS
別冊花とゆめ

Palace Meidi

Volume 1

パレス・メイヂ 1

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［其ノ四］——一三五

［あとがき］——一八九

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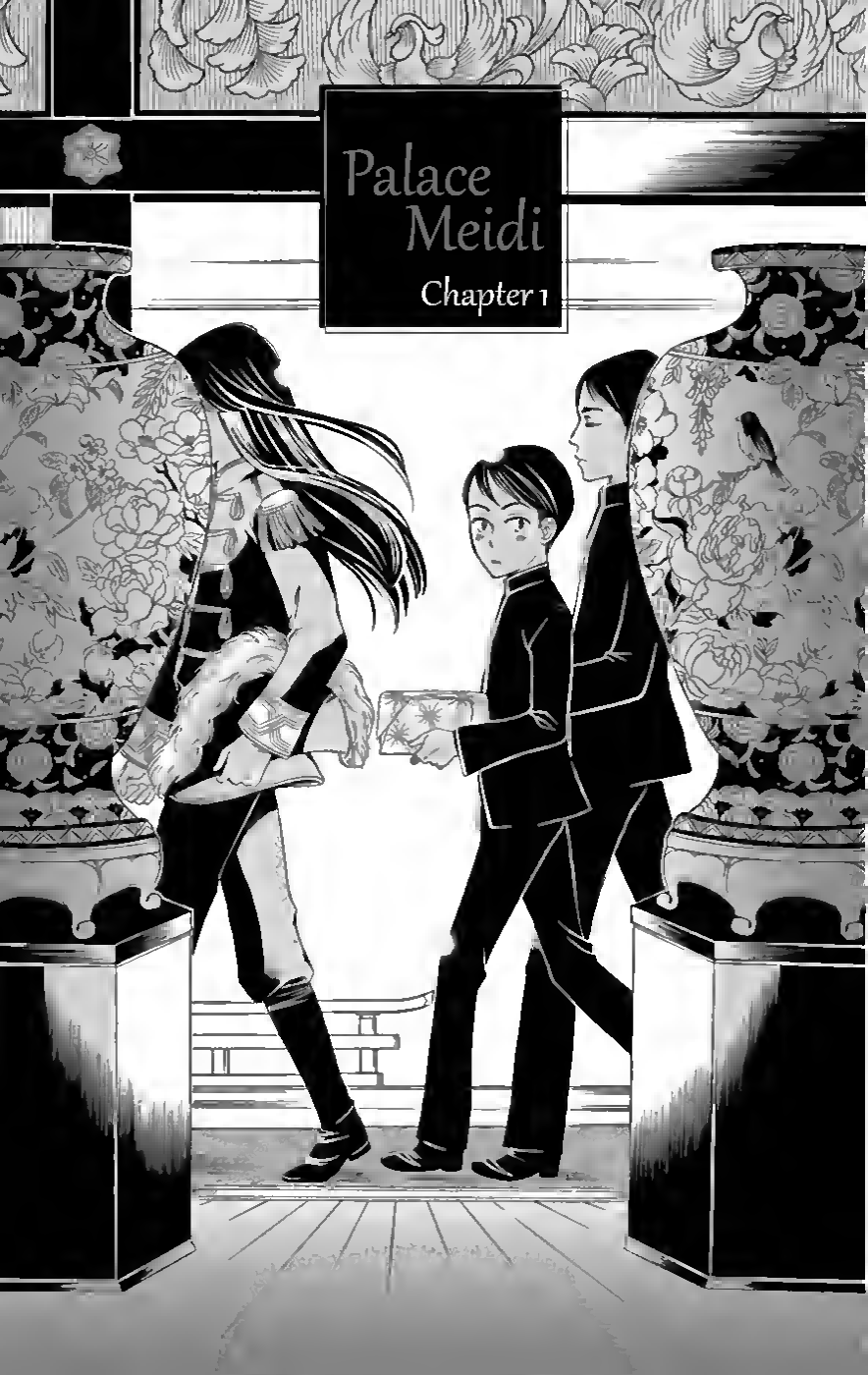
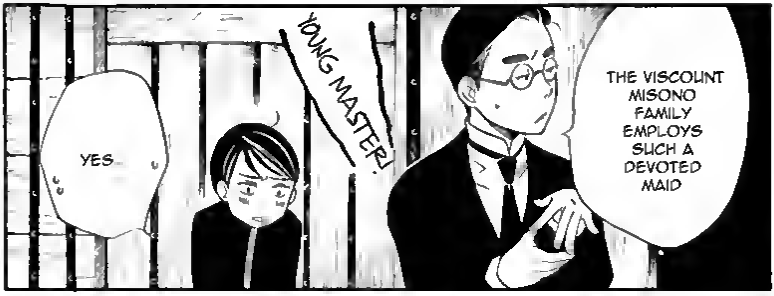

Palace
Meidi
Chapter 1

WELL, OUR HOUSE'S YOUNG MASTER IS KIND TO THE SERVANTS
SURELY IN THIS PLACE, YOU WILL DO YOUR WORK DEPENDABLY! YES!!
grip
YOUNG MASTER~ I WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU TO RETURN HOME TO ME
YOUNG MASTER, DILLIGENTLY BE-
Knock Knock
It's dangerous
OTOMI!
SLAM
puff


THE VISCOUNT MISONO FAMILY EMPLOYS SUCH A DEVOTED MAID
YOUNG MASTER!
YES

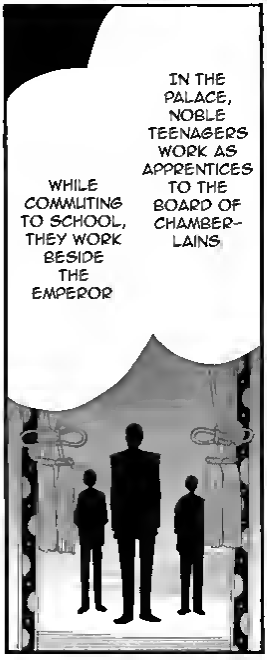
I ENTERED THE PALACE IN THE SPRING OF MY FOURTEENTH YEAR

FSSSH
THAT IS THE TSU-KOUDO-
THE OFFICE FOR PEOPLE WHO TAKE CARE OF THE PALACE'S MISCELLANEOUS AFFAIRS
Ah, is that so?
WHAT'S THAT?
the palace?

THIS IS THE PLACE YOU WILL WORK
THIS ROOFED MUD WALL FACES THE PALACE
IT BEGAN WITH
THIS MARRIAGE PROPOSAL WAS RECOMMENDED BY YOUR OLDER BROTHER HOW CAN YOU BE DISSATISFIED?!
ISN'T IT GOOD ENOUGH, SHIZUKO?
THE SCENT OF PLUM BLOSSOMS BLOWING FROM THE CAPITAL.

KIMI-YORI.
YOU'RE PLANNING TO SELL SHIZUKO TO SOME NOUVEAU-RICHE
THE TORADA FAMILY IS FRIENDLY WITH OURS, AND HE'S ONLY FOURTY-FIVE. HE'S PLANNING TO MAKE YOU HIS SECOND WIFE.
ENRAGED
I'M THE HEAD OF THIS FAMILY. DON'T SPEAK TO ME THAT WAY!!
BULLS-EYE
BROTHER!
IT CAN'T BE AVOIDED, KIMI-CHAN
SNIFF
SHUT UP, SHIZUKO!
FATHER DIED WITH A PEERAGE, BUT BROTHER'S DEBAUCHED LIFESTYLE HAS MADE US A POOR FAMILY
sob sob sniff...

I'M GOING TO WORK.
sob sob


IN THE PALACE, NOBLE TEENAGERS WORK AS APPRENTICES TO THE BOARD OF CHAMBER-LAINS
WHILE COMMUTING TO SCHOOL, THEY WORK BESIDE THE EMPEROR

I'LL GET A JOB IN THE PALACE!

fwhhh
.....
DON'T YOU STILL HAVE TO ATTEND MIDDLE SCHOOL?

KIMI-CHAN
I'VE HEARD THAT THEY RECEIVE A SALARY FOR A PERIOD OF TWO OR THREE YEARS
SO, DURING THIS TIME, SHIZUKO'S MARRIAGE WOULD BE-
waah
FWAHH
Two or three years?
SOUNDS GOOD
THE TRUTH IS, I ALSO WORKED IN THE PALACE WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE
FOR SOME REASON, I SOON RESIGNED
IT WAS DURING THE REIGN OF THE PREVIOUS EMPEROR- THE MEIDI* EMPEROR
EVEN NOW, IT'S BURNED INTO MY EYELIDS

*Here "Meidi" is written with the characters "bright" and "mercy", unlike the real life Meiji era, which was written with the characters "bright" and "peace".

THE CHANDELIERS GILTTERED WITH GOLD AND SILVER
FLOWERS AND BIRDS WERE SCATTERED OVER THE COFFERED CEILING.
THEY WERE MADE IN THE IMPERIAL CAPITAL FOR THE MEIDI EMPEROR'S PALACE-
PALACE MEIDI!

THAT IS THE PALACE'S CHIGUSA ROOM.
ALONG THIS CORRIDOR IS THE EMPEROR'S OFFICE AND OUTER CHAMBERS.
stop ...
WHAT'S IN FRONT OF US?
UM...
YOU WILL ENTER. I WILL NOT.
patter patter
CLATTER
KUGA, I'M COMING IN.
WE MEET IN THIS ROOM~
?

HOW DO YOU DO?
HOW DO YOU DO?
STARTING TODAY, HE'LL BE WORKING AS AN ATTENDANT TO THE BOARD OF CHAMBERLAINS HE'S MISONO KIMIYOSHI
bow
AND THIS IS SECOND YEAR ATTENDANT TOUTSUJI SANECHIKA
THIS IS FIRST YEAR ATTENDANT KUGA MICHIHIKO.

THE GRAND CHAMBERLAIN, THE CABINET MINISTERS AND THE ARMY GENERALS CANNOT ENTER.
BEHIND THESE CEDAR DOORS, MEN ARE PROHIBITED IN THE INNER CHAMBERS.
EH?
WELL, THEN, GOOD LUCK.
THE COURT LADIES HAVE THE INNER CHAMBERS
THE CHAMBER-LAINS HAVE THE OUTER CHAMBERS
ONLY WE AND THE EMPEROR ARE ALLOWED TO GO THROUGH THESE BIRD-DECORATED CEDAR DOORS
OUR ROLE IS TO SERVE AS INTERMEDIARIES BETWEEN THE "OUTER" AND "INNER" PALACE.

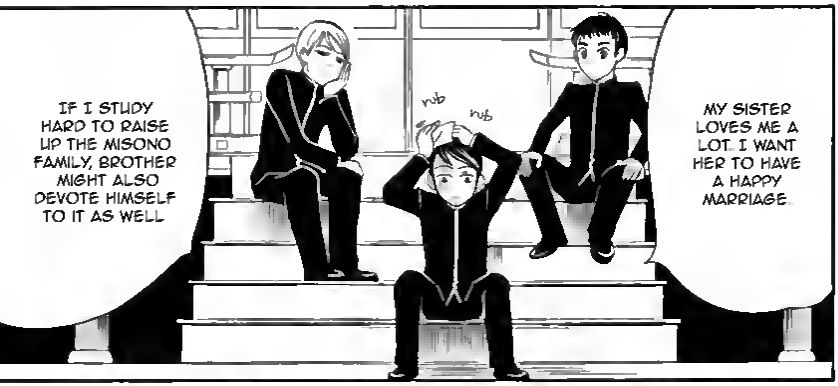
A NEW-COMER?
WOW
DO YOUR WORK WELL.
HOW DO YOU DO?
YES.
WE COULD BE BURNED BY THE EMPEROR IN THIS JOB.
MISONO.
IF THE COURT LADIES DISLIKE US, IT'S THE END CAN YOU TRY AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE TO LOOK CUTE?
GRIN
Yes.

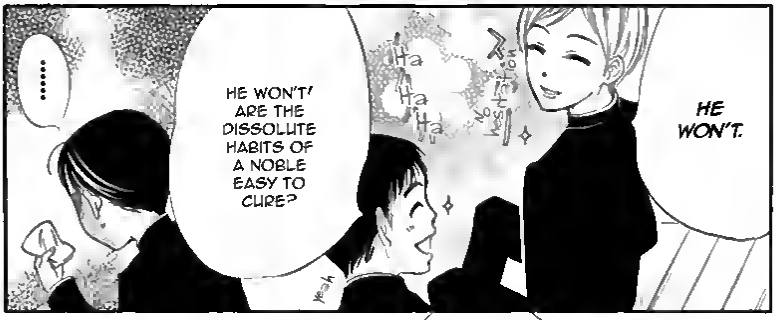
YOUR...
SAY NOTHING
YOUR MAJESTY,
THIS IS THE NEW BOARD OF CHAMBERLAINS ATTENDANT, MISONO.
WOOF
WORK HARD.

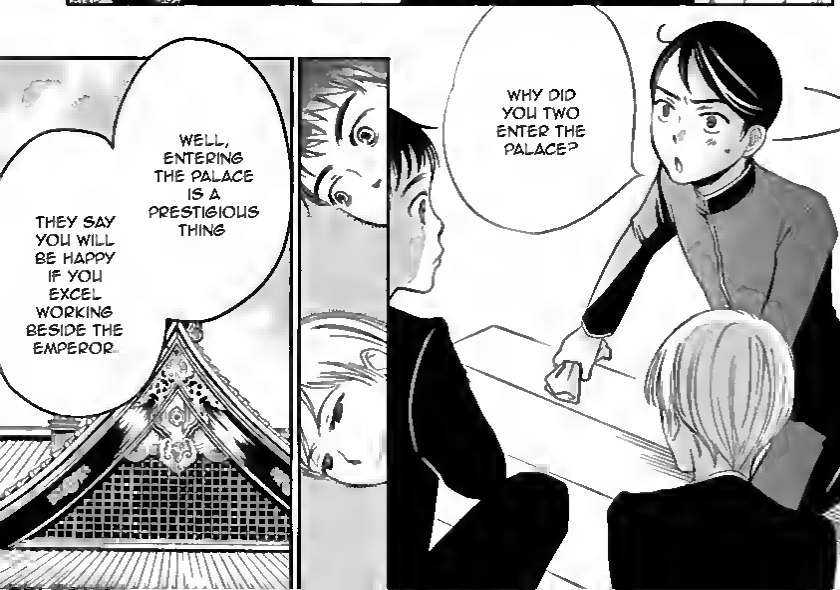
パレス・メイヂ

THE FIRST TIME I WAS HONORED WITH A WORD
YES, YOUR MAJESTY.
THAT WAS
THE FIRST TIME I WAS GIVEN AN ORDER
Wheeze...
Huh Huh

CAW
CAW
CAW
CAW
FLAP
CHORES?
Wide
UM... WAS THIS AN ORDER?
Chasing away
TODAY, WE CAN'T GO TO THE OUTER CHAMBERS
THIS GUY IS THE BOSS HERE
YOU'RE CRYING MISONO, LET'S TAKE A BREAK
Flap
Flap
AS YOU WOULD EXPECT, THE BOSS ALWAYS DOES THIS TO NEWCOMERS
Pat
Pat
INDEED, THE MISONO FAMILY ISN'T DOING WELL


IF I STUDY HARD TO RAISE UP THE MISONO FAMILY, BROTHER MIGHT ALSO DEVOTE HIMSELF TO IT AS WELL
rub
rub
MY SISTER LOVES ME A LOT. I WANT HER TO HAVE A HAPPY MARRIAGE.


.....
HE WON'T' ARE THE DISSOLUTE HABITS OF A NOBLE EASY TO CURE?
Ha Ha Ha
HE WON'T.


WELL, ENTERING THE PALACE IS A PRESTIGIOUS THING
THEY SAY YOU WILL BE HAPPY IF YOU EXCEL WORKING BESIDE THE EMPEROR.
WHY DID YOU TWO ENTER THE PALACE?

ABOVE ALL,
I ALSO CAME TO THE PALACE TO STUDY!
What is that line?
BECAUSE I LIKE IT WHEN THE COURT LADIES FUSS OVER ME.
Toutetsuji san!
THAT'S NOT A GOOD REASON
Are palace women really that great?
Uh huh I like older women
AND THEN, THE FIRST EVENT OCCURED.
CAW!

THAT'S WHERE THE EMPEROR'S CALLIGRAPHY, VASES, AND SUCH ARE KEPT.
WELL, NEXT IT'S DUSTING THE LIBRARY
slide
!
BE CAREFUL, MISONO IF EVEN ONE THING IS BROKEN-
IT'S... ALREADY BROKEN

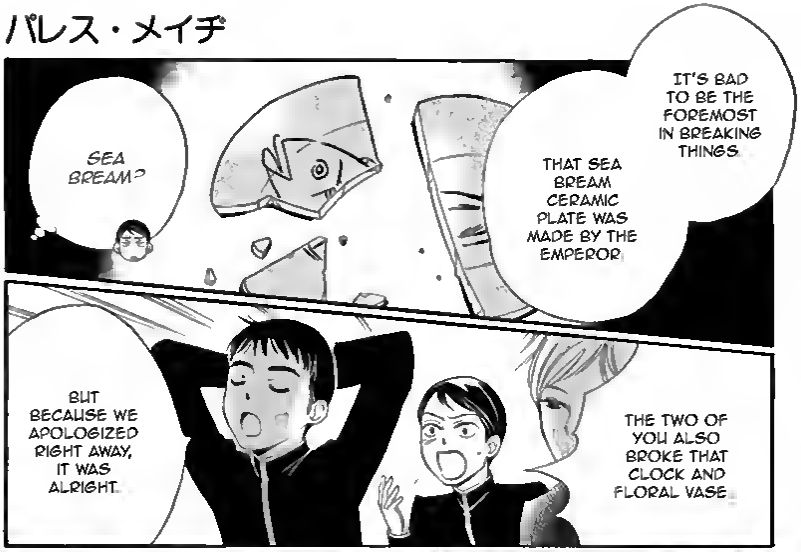
MATSUBA-NO-SUKE-SAMA,
HOW DID HE HARM THE EMPEROR?
Head Palace Lady
IT WOULD BE GENEROUS TO SAY, "HE COULDN'T HELP BUT DESTROY THINGS."
Well—
BUT SOMEONE ELSE IS ALSO LIKE THIS.
glare
That's not true.
PREVIOUSLY, WHO CAUSED THE ARCHERY ROOM'S CLOCK TO FALL?
IT WAS ME.
AND WHO CHIPPED THE CHISUGA ROOM'S FLORAL VASE?
IT WAS ME.
SO THE NEWCOMER-
But this time it wasn't us!!
I'M CALLED MISONO!

GASP...
MISONO...
MISONO!
WHO!
chatter
chatter
IS MISONO-SAN YOUR OLDER BROTHER?
YES, MY OLDER BROTHER WORKED IN THE PALACE FOR A LITTLE WHILE
YES, I REMEMBER
IT WAS ONLY FOR ONE DAY, YOUR OLDER BROTHER WAS...
HA HA HA
THESE PALACE LADIES AREN'T THE BEAUTIFUL WOMEN I'D HEARD ABOUT!
You'll have to resign.
Now, Yes.
Did they hear you?

Maybe...
I'm not the
Abeno family
IT WAS MY OLDER BROTHER
tsk
Wow it's the younger brother
So that's the younger brother
chatter
chatter

AH—
CHOO
BROTHER

"IF IT'S HIS YOUNGER BROTHER, HE'S CAPABLE OF ANYTHING, RIGHT?"
THE WORDS OF A BLOOD RELATIVE ARE THE SAME AS YOUR OWN IN THIS WORLD
You guys...
LIKE I TOLD YOU, IF THE PALACE LADIES HATE YOU
IT WAS NICE TO KNOW YOU
STAY HEALTHY, MISONO GIVE THIS TO YOUR SISTER AS A WEDDING PRESENT
I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!
You were with me the whole time!


SEA BREAM?
IT'S BAD TO BE THE FOREMOST IN BREAKING THINGS.
THAT SEA BREAM CERAMIC PLATE WAS MADE BY THE EMPEROR.
BUT BECAUSE WE APOLOGIZED RIGHT AWAY, IT WAS ALRIGHT.
THE TWO OF YOU ALSO BROKE THAT CLOCK AND FLORAL VASE.

IT WOULD BE GENEROUS TO SAY, "HE COULDN'T HELP BUT DESTROY THINGS."

IF YOU BREAK SOMETHING AND CONCEAL IT, BUT THEY KNOW IT WAS YOU, YOU WILL ENCOUNTER THE IMPERIAL WRATH.
yowl

LATELY, WHY AM I FEELING SO ANGRY?
Let's go fishing in the koi pond.
THE PLATE WAS ALREADY CRACKED. BESIDES, I WASN'T NAMED AS THE CRIMINAL...
looks around
WELL, ISN'T HE A PART OF THE VISCOUNT MISONO'S FAMILY.
LOOK, THAT BOY IS THE CARELESS NEWCOMER.
WHISPER
ha
NO! I'VE LOST SIGHT OF KUGA AND TOUTSUJI
Where am I...

step
step
I DON'T CARE I DON'T CARE...
NO MATTER WHAT THEY SAY, I'M INNOCENT
WOBBLE
THUD
whisper whisper
HE PROBABLY FEELS THE SAME WAY HIS BROTHER DID
.....
Ow Ouch!
...
GULP...
IF I RETURN HOME, I'LL ONLY BE THE "YOUNG MASTER."
"SOCIAL CLASS IS VERY DIFFERENT WITHIN THE PALACE."
that guy.

WITH MANY SERVANTS WAITING ON ME
RAISED IN INDULGENCE
I WAS LIVING IN THE HOME OF A NOBLE FAMILY,
Eh?
glare
.....
IF SHE HADN'T BEEN CRYING ABOUT GOING OFF TO BECOME A BRIDE
IT'S ALL MY STUPID BROTHER'S FAULT! SISTER'S TOO.
tearing up...
GRAB
AHHH, THAT'S WRONG! I'M EMBARASSED TO HAVE THOUGHT IT....!
I WAS CONCEITED ABOUT BELONGING TO A NOBLE FAMILY. I'
I'm sorry, sister!!
Yelling into a vase...

UMM... MAY I ASK WHO YOU ARE?
IF YOU'RE ENTERING THROUGH THE BIRD-DECORATED CEDAR DOORS-
KNOCK
WAS TREATED GENTLY
MUMBLE
BEYOND REPAIR...
!!

?
OUCH MISONO, YOU SELFISHLY WALKED OFF LIKE A LOST CHILD!
What's broken!?
I ONLY LOOKED AT THE VASE, BUT...
SO, YOU'VE BROKEN SOMETHING ELSE THIS TIME...
IT'S NOT TRUE, TOUTSUJI-SAN! I SAW SOMEONE WALK INTO THIS ROOM.
TELL US HONESTLY WHO DID THIS!
IT WASN'T ME!!
DESTROYING THE EMPEROR'S PICTURE ALBUM WAS DISRESPECTFUL!!
AAH-!! THE IMPERIAL PICTURE ALBUM HAS BEEN DESTROYED!!
how heartless

IF YOU COULD GIVE THE EMPEROR SOME KIND OF APOLOGY...
NOW, I REMEMBER TOO,
WHY THE FOURTEEN YEAR-OLD ME SHOULD SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT
I ...WILL APOLOGIZE TO THE EMPEROR
TOU-TSUJI-SAN, THE EMPEROR IS IN THE THRONE ROOM, RIGHT?
huh?
turn
MISONO?
Ah, yes

WHY DID I DO SOMETHING SO OUTRAGEOUS?
STEP
EARNESTLY,
WOOF
THIS WASN'T JUST A FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD BOY'S DANGEROUS CURIOSITY
PATH PATH
I HUMBLY ADVISE YOU THAT THE IMPERIAL PLATE AND PICTURE-BOOK WERE DAMAGED.

NO!
BUT IT HAPPENED WHERE I WAS WORKING DUE TO MY CARELESS-NESS
.....
ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT YOU DAMAGED THEM?
I THINK I SHOULD OFFER MY LIFE IN ATONEMENT.
WHAT...
YOU WILL DIE RIGHT HERE IN APOLOGY!
Someone!
SOMETHING LIKE THIS CAN'T BE AVOIDED?
Mm...

!
SLAM
SLIP..
IT CAN'T BE HELPED!
squeal
whoosh..
.....

YOU HAVE HARMED ME!
THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME I SAW THE FACE
OF THE MEIDI EMPEROR'S FIRST PRINCESS,
NOW THE CURRENT EMPEROR, AKIKO-SAMA

I WANTED TO THROW IT AWAY.
What is this?
blush
Your majesty,
What a beautiful sea bream!
No. It's not a sea bream.
EVEN IF I SAID TO THROW IT AWAY, THEY WOULDN'T LISTEN
THE PALACE LADIES WOULD THOUGHTLESSLY BE THANKFUL FOR MY "IMPERIAL" CALLIGRAPHY PLAYTHINGS.
WOULDN'T I BE EMBARASSED?
THOSE CHILDISH DRAWINGS

NO
THE PLATE'S SWEETFISH WAS BEAUTIFUL
THAT'S RIGHT, IT WAS A SWEETFISH
RUSTLE
STILL, IT'S ALREADY BROKEN

GO AWAY.
whine~
YOUR MAJESTY,
MISONO HAS TAKEN THE DAY OFF
A MEMBER OF THAT FAMILY HAS AGAIN ENTERED THE PALACE,
AND BROKEN THINGS ON HIS FIRST DAY
HE WASN'T TIMID ABOUT SPEAKING TO YOUR MAJESTY.
MATSUBA...
munch munch

HE BROKE NOTHING.
HE PERFORMED IN A PLAY WITH ME,
AND PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE.
ER...?
Then, who was the culprit...
WHAT!? WHEN HE ADMITTED IT HONESTLY, YOUR MAJESTY PERMITTED IT?

Well,
BUT WHEN DID MISONO BREAK INTO THE ROOM?
The picture book was broken, then the plate...
ARE ...ARE THESE PEOPLE IDIOTS?
I TESTED THE PATIENCE OF THE EMPEROR
NO, I'M THE IDIOT
MISONO
FOR YOUR VACATION,
Something to share
THE EMPEROR HAS GIVEN US CANDY
CONGRATULATIONS, THERE'S SOME FOR YOU, TOO
FOR ME TOO?
THERE ARE WORDS FROM THE EMPEROR AS WELL

"MISONO DAMAGED THE PLATE AND THE PICTURE-BOOK THE CRIMINAL WAS CAUGHT.
FROM NOW ON, HE WILL FOREVER-MORE SERVE HERE."
CHATTER...!
...YES MA'AM!
BLOWING IN THE WIND FROM THE IMPERIAL CAPITAL, THE MULTI-LAYERED CHERRY BLOSSOMS DANCED IN THE EVENING

Eh
I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO TELL ANYONE ABOUT THE PALACE
rustle
OTOMI
Pitch-
Patter...
YOUNG MASTER REALLY!?
YOU ACTUALLY SAW THE EMPEROR?
IN MY FOURTEENTH SPRING,
MY MEAGER SALARY WAS A FEW SWEETS
crunch
ONLY THE EMPEROR
MY HEART WAS AT PEACE
Well, I is that so?
.. DOES NOT HAVE A TALENT FOR DRAWING!